

Coressell Smoot #263901
Wateree Correctional Institution
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P.O. Box 189
Rembert, SC 29128

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

November 25, 2015

Dear The Honorable Governor Nikki Haley,

My name is Coressell Antiwan Smoot. I have been incarcerated in the South Carolina Department of Corrections since June 26th, 2007. I was sentenced to a total of 17 years by the Florence County General Sessions Court for armed robbery and possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime. During these past eight years, I have matured immensely and now I view things much differently than I did prior to my incarceration. This protractive prison term has enabled me to look inward and identify exactly what my character defects were when I was in society.

I'm confident that you've received these types of letters abound, and I can only hope that this particular one will strike you as being candid and sincere. As trite as it may sound, I have changed and I can say with certitude that I will never return to my old ways. I have used this time very wisely and I've accomplished things that were not imaginable to me when I was in society.

I am totally culpable and reprehensible in terms of my crime and I have learned foremost, that I must own the responsibility for all of my misdeeds. As much as I am mortified and rife with remorse, I cannot undo the past. I can, however, repay society. Here in SCDC, I have worked as a tutor for the G.E.D. preparation class and the Warden at Trenton Correctional Institution (Warden Bush) slated me as a mentor in his mentorship program where I advised youthful offenders. In those positions, I had the opportunity to speak to offenders who were much younger than myself and who didn't fully appreciate the importance of a clearly defined value system. Nor did they realize how valuable freedom is and the innate potential that so many of us have. Inside of many of those young men, I saw my old self. That experience also caused me to reflect on the morals and values that I was taught as a child/young man by my family, teachers and friends. All of those people saw my potential long ago and tried to nurture it but I chose to be an abberant child, following the wrong crowd. Out of sheer nescience and immaturity, I wasn't ready to live up to the morals set forth by them.

When I came to prison, I was 26 years old. Now, I am 35. Within that span of time, I realized that a man can't become a man until he learns how to become a man. I was not a man before but now, without a shred of doubt in my mind, I am. Prior to coming to prison I was a high school graduate and I had a myriad of jobs between the ages of 16 and 26. Most of those jobs were in fast food restaurants and supermarkets. In 2000, I earned certification from Piedmont Technical College for brickmasonry. Subsequent to me earning those credentials, I worked sporadically as a brickmason for Myer's Masonry in Florence, S.C. There was an epoch in my history where I developed a toxic marijuana addiction. That became the catalyst for the destructive patterns which ultimately landed me in prison.

During this tenure in prison, after doing a self-inventory, I studied other fellow offenders in the 5 prisons that I've been in. Upon doing so, I realized that the inmate population can be divided into three respective social classes. First, there are the drug addicts who embody the lion's share of the

population. Secondly, there are those who have mental disorders. Some have been diagnosed and others haven't. And, finally you have the minority who are normal people who made terrible mistakes but have the potential to be productive citizens. Moreover, some of them can be assets to their communities. Its just that they are being impeded by their circumstances.

I am a part of that minority class. Within that minority class, only a small percentage retain their proper state of mind and discover their life's purpose. The others eventually succumb to the ways of the drug addicts and the mentally disordered. I came to prison and perpetuated the marijuana habit that I had in society. I also imbibed alcohol on occasions, less frequently than I smoked. This behavior persisted until approximately four years ago when I, without any counseling or drug treatment, made an adamant decision to reclaim possession of my life and turn it in a different direction. As you know, drugs and alcohol are both accessible in the prisons. I quit smoking and drinking four years ago and I haven't been inebriated or relapsed since then. Instead, I've used my time to further educate and refine myself, and to hone my skills that I will be using to become a productive and respectable citizen in society.

Exclusive of the facts that I've mentored, remained sober, earned a forklifting license and scored silver on the Work Keys test, my most notable achievement is that I launched my own publishing company (Wild Life Publishing) with the help of my mother who is my Power of Attorney. In 2010, I wrote and self-published my first book – a fiction novel of approximately 90,000 words, entitled Moving Target. In 2014, I published my second book entitled Promise: A Bloody Love Story. That book is also a fiction novel of approximately 90,000 words. Both of those books are currently available at Amazon.com and in Barnes and Noble bookstores.

My third book is scheduled to be released in January of 2016. It is a non-fiction self-help book thats targeted towards prisoners and people in society who are living lifestyles where incarceration is imminent. In that book I addressed the fallacies of the criminal lifestyle, the pains of incarceration, and the importance of a clearly defined value system. Upon my release from prison, I intend to make a long term profession of writing and publishing books. Eventually, I want to publish other authors but I am currently the only author under The Wild Life Publishing imprint. I write my books under the pseudonym Now Born – a name intended to indicate, to my readers, a man who has transitioned from negative to positive.

I no longer communicate with my old friends. The ones who haven't been jailed or killed are living counter productive lives and will, likely, soon fall prey to one of the above circumstances. My tunnel focus is to return home to be a positive contribution to my family. My parents are both in their sixties and they are in dire need of my help because I am their only son. I don't have any children and these are my most productive years. I really want to have a wife and a family. I also want to enroll in college and pursue a degree.

I was sentenced to 17 years although the initial plea offer was ten years. I was out on bail when the plea bargain was introduced to me but I allowed the plea offer to expire. I was afraid of going to prison for ten years, plus remiss of the fact that my sentence was becoming exacerbated by the day. I made an ill-advised choice to allow the plea offer to expire, allowing my emotions to supersede my intelligence. In my immature mind, the only thing that registered was that I was giving myself some type of reprieve against going to prison. Six days after my plea offer expired, I received 17 years. If I would've accepted their ten year plea offer, I would be out of prison right now because South Carolina only requires that state inmates serve 85% of their time if they have institutional jobs. I have worked throughout my entire sentence, and I have credit for approximately 8 years and 6 months. Before I bailed out of the county jail, I served 107 days which the judge gave me credit for. Then, on June 26th, 2007, I was sent to prison up until now.

The degree of shame and remorse that I feel because of my past misdeeds is ineffable. Also, I have suffered a great deal because of them. Please grant me a pardon to be released and cleared of my

guilty conviction. I need a chance to return to society so that I can work, have something in life and begin building a legacy of my own. If afforded this opportunity, I will not disappoint you, myself, or my loved ones by recidivating. I will maintain my course and remain on the trajectory that I've been on for the last four years.

Enclosed with this letter are some of the credentials that I've earned while in prison, just to illustrate to you my growth and development. I am living proof that prison reform is possible. I would also like to add that, if granted this pardon, I would like to partake in any mentorship programs that you may have established. I want to serve as a positive influence for troubled youths by sharing my experiences with them, encouraging them, and providing them with ideas for innovative and honest alternatives for making a living. I believe that I owe this to society, at least to Florence, S.C. where my crime transpired. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

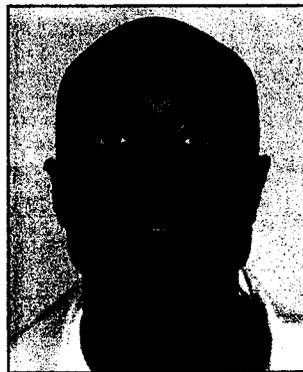
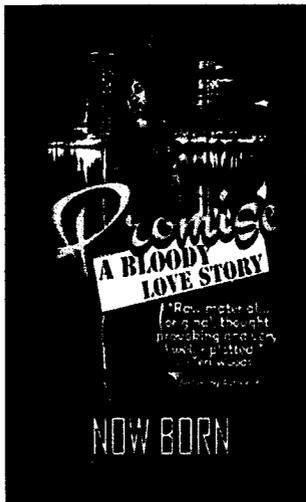
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Books by Now Born



Now Born
Author and
CEO/Chairman of
Wild Life Publling



Now Born was born Antiwan Smoot in Florence, South Carolina on August 23rd, 1980. He has also resided in Maryland, New York City and North Carolina. He currently resides in South Carolina and is single without any children

Now Born is a full-time author as well as the C.E.O./Chairman of Wild Life Publishing, a company which he launched in 2012. Wild Life was originally the name of a Hip Hop music group that Now Born was a member of. That group consisted of 2 other members who were his best friends ever since his early teenage years. They both passed away between the years of 2006 and 2012, so Now Born named his company Wild Life Publishing to carry on their legacies.

In 2012, Now Born published his first book, entitled Moving Target. Although he was the actual author, for personal reasons, he chose to release that book in his baby-sister's name, Lavonda Wilburn. Moving Target is a fast-paced Hip Hop urban fiction novel that is packed with drama, action and suspense. Now Born's history consists of both lifestyles: the lawful lifestyle of earning an honest living, and also an extreme life of crime. His criminal past could be considered as a gift and a curse. A gift in the sense that it has enabled him to provide his readers with vivid imagery within his writings. And, a curse in the sense that the author has served a lengthy prison term because of those experiences.



After publishing *Moving Target*, Now Born decided to grow his writing style and expand beyond the "urban fiction" bracket. That's when he wrote and released his sophomore novel in October of 2014, a Murder-Romance fiction entitled *Promise: A Bloody Love Story*. He has also written a non-fiction book which he is currently preparing for publication. Simultaneously, he is busy completing two other fiction novels that he intends to release in the very near future. Now Born is currently the only author under the *Wild Life* Publishing imprint, but he intends to sign more authors who can help him to flood the literary world with quality literature of all genres. He can be contacted at wildlife.publishing@yahoo.com.



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